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Planners look at transportation needs

BALANCE: Riverside County has a lower ratio of jobs per household, officials say.

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By BRADLEY WEAVER / The Press-Enterprise

TEMECULA - Some of Southern California's top planners met Thursday in Temecula to discuss ways to balance housing, jobs and transportation amid runaway growth.

Those attending the meeting between the San Diego Association of Governments and the Southern California Association of Governments mapped out future transportation needs, focusing largely on the Inland area where the population has grown by 300,000 people in the last three years to more than 3.5 million.

The relationship between the areas is close, considering that 29,000 Riverside County commuters travel to San Diego County each day.

The two counties have also collaborated on a report that looks at strategies on transportation, housing and economic development.

The increased number of long-distance commuters is fueling traffic congestion

It's also created the need to bring jobs to existing Inland communities, said Rick Bishop, executive director of Western Riverside Council of Governments.

Riverside County, for example, has less than one job per household, while San Diego County offers 1.2 jobs per household, officials said.

A long-range plan discussed Thursday by the Southern California Association of Governments, the planning group for six counties, calls for wider freeways and more carpool lanes in the Inland area, as well as extending Metrolink commuter-train service south into Perris.

Those improvements could be in place by 2030.

The planning agency also suggests that March Air Reserve Base, which is used for military and commercial cargo, allow commercial jet use.

Doing so would take pressure off Los Angeles International Airport and handle as many as 8million passengers a year.

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